

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CANADIAN VIEWS ON SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

REF: (A) USNATO 3140, (B) USNATO 3217

1. FOLLOWING ARE DEPT COMMENTS ON CANADIAN PAPER ON
SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY. MISSION MAY DRAW ON THEM EITHER IN
POLADS OR DURING NAC SESSION ON REPORT OF NATO REGIONAL
EXPERTS ON SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE. WE WILL RE-
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VIEW THE RELEVANCE OF THIS PAPER TO THE ALLIANCE EAST-
WEST STUDY ONCE WE HAVE RECEIVED THE DIRECT CANADIAN CONTRI-
BUTION TO STUDY PART III (REFTEL B).

2. DEPT AGREES THAT US COMMENTS ON CANADIAN PAPER CAN BE
KEPT GENERAL IN NATURE. SPECIFICS OF PAPER GET INTO IN-
TERPRETATIONS AND MOTIVATIONS RE SOVIET ACTIONS AND POLI-

CIES IN RECENT MONTHS. WITHOUT DISCOUNTING THOSE AREAS WHERE SOVIET POSTURE IS SEEN AS HARDENING, THE COMPLEX OF SOVIET POLICIES AND INTERACTION WITH THE WEST DURING THE PA;T THREE MONTHS (PERIOD USED BY CANADIANS) IS CHARACTERIZED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS AND EXTERNAL EVENTS WHICH MAKE IT PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT SOVIET POSITIONS ARE HARDENING "ACROSS PRACTICALLY THE ENTIRE FOREIGN POLICY SPECTRUM BUT PARTICULARLY IN RELATIONS WITH THE USA" (OPENING SENTENCE OF CANADIAN PAPER) AS A LONG-TERM SHIFT.

3. FOLLOWING POINTS COULD BE MADE WITH REFERENCE TO PARTICULAR AREAS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND REGIONAL SITUATIONS CITED IN CANADIAN PAPER.

4. CSCE: WE AGREE THAT SOVIETS RETURNED TO BELGRADE AFTER CHRISTMAS BREAK AND ADOPTED ADAMANT STANCE ON DRAFT OF FINAL DOCUMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, WESTERN COUNTRIES FIRMLY PURSUED HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS DURING MUCH OF BELGRADE PROCESS AND SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE ON FINAL DOCUMENT WAS, IN PART, A REACTION TO SUSTAINED WESTERN EMPHASIS ON SPOTLIGHTING SOVIET SHORTCOMINGS IN BASKET THREE. IN OTHER WORDS, SOVIETS WERE BEING REACTIVE AND RESULTS OF BELGRADE DO NOT ADD UP TO A SOVIET "SUCCESS" BECAUSE OF THEIR HARD LINE ON WORDING OF FINAL DOCUMENT.

5. MIDDLE EAST: LARGELY DUE TO SADAT VISIT TO ISRAEL
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AND OTHER UNEXPECTED EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS, SOVIETS WERE ALSO FORCED INTO REACTIVE POSTURE AFTER THESE EVENTS UNDERCUT PROCESS OF RECONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE, AS FORESEEN IN US-SOVIET JOINT STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST IN OCTOBER. SOVIET SUPPORT OF ARAB REJECTIONIST FORCES MAY BE SEEN AS HARDENING OF POSTURE, BUT ALSO AS PREDICTABLE RESPONSE TO EVENTS SINCE SOVIET VIEWS OF SEPARATE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND LIKELIHOOD THAT A SUCCESSFUL SADAT-BEGIN INITIATIVE WOULD SHARPLY CURTAIL THE SOVIET ROLE DICTATED THAT THEY OPPOSE SADAT INITIATIVE WITH FULL SUPPORT OF THE REJECTIONISTS.

6. THE HORN: THE HORN IS A CLEAR EXAMPLE OF SOVIET INTERVENTION IN A THIRD WORLD CONFLICT. SOVIETS AND CUBANS SAW TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY IN VIEW OF MENGISITUS AVOWED MARXIST ORIENTATION AND BECAUSE OF SOMALI OCCUPATION OF OGADEN, LATTER CONSIDERATION ENABLING SOVIETS TO APPEAR AS CHAMPION OF ETHIOPIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY.

AT SAME TIME, SOVIETS ARE AWARE THAT THEIR INVOLVEMENT HAS AROUSED WESTERN CONCERN OVER DIMENSIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF SUCH INTERVENTION IN REGIONAL CONFLICTS.

7. SALT II- DEPARTMENT BELIEVES MISSION SHOULD CONFINE COMMENT ON SALT PORTION OF CANADIAN PAPER TO OBSERVATION THAT NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES HAVE PROCEEDED IN STEADY AND SERUS VEIN. SINCE GROMYKO VISIT, DELEGATIONS IN GENEVA HAVE SUCCEEDED IN RESOLVING OR NARROWING DIFFERENCES ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES AS AMBASSADOR WARNKE TOLD THE NAC. NEITHER PRAVDA ARTICLE ON SALT IN MID-FEBRUARY NOR RECENT ARBATOV ARTICLE IN PRAVDA SHOULD BE HELD AS EVIDENCE THAT

SOVIETS ARE UNWILLING TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS. SOVIET STATEMENTS IN PRESS DO, OF COURSE, CALL ON US SIDE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRESS, BUT SOVIETS HAVE IN NO WAY ADOPTED "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" APPROACH IN NEGOTIATIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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8. INDIAN OCEAN NEGOTIATIONS: DEPARTMENT DOES NOT AGREE THAT INDIAN OCEAN TALKS REPRESENT EXAMPLE OF "STIFFENING SOVIET NEGOTIATING POSTURE." FACT THAT TALKS REACHED FOURTH SESSION STAGE ACCOUNTS FOR MORE ATTENTION TO ACTUAL DETAILS OF AN EVENTUAL AGREEMENT ON THE PART OF BOTH SIDES. MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECT OF LAST SESSION OF TALKS WAS UNDENIABLE CONNECTION WITH EVENTS AT THE TIME IN HORN OF AFRICA, WHICH HARDENED US POSTURE RATHER THAN SOVIETS.

9. DISSIDENTS AND MINORITIES: DEPARTMENT ENTIRELY AGREES WITH CANADIAN VIEWS ON SOVIET RETURN IN RECENT MONTHS TO TOUGH INTERNAL POLICY TOWARDS DISSIDENTS AND NATIONAL MINORITIES. IN WAKE OF BELGRADE CONFERENCE, SOVIETS HAVE CLEARLY DECIDED TO BECOME STRICTER AND, PERHAPS, COMPENSATE FOR WHATEVER "RELAXATION" THEY MAY HAVE FELT OBLIGATED TO OBSERVE WHILE BELGRADE MEETING WAS PUTTING FOCUS ON THIS VERY SENSITIVE ASPECT OF SOVIET INTERNAL POLICIES.

10. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES CANADIAN PAPER IS TIMELY CONTRIBUTION IN ASSESSING EVENTS OF PAST SEVERAL MONTHS. ALTHOUGH POINTS NOTED ABOVE ARE INTENDED TO POINT UP SOME OF THE VARIABLES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PARTICULAR AREAS CITED BY THE CANADIANS, WE ARE NOT QUESTIONING CANADIAN THESIS THAT SUM TOTAL IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN APPEARANCE OF A HARDER SOVIET POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THE WEST AND THE US IN PARTICULAR. AS CANADIANS POINT OUT IN CONCLUSION, SOVIET LINE MAY BE TACTICAL. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO ASSESS ALL ASPECTS OF SOVIET POSTURE AS PART OF OUR REGULAR CONSULTATIONS ON EAST-WEST DEVELOPMENTS. VANCE

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